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SHIFTING INTERESTS: THE IMPACT OF THE IRAQ
CRISIS ON NATO AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE
TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONSHIP

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ABSTRACT

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TITLE: Shifting Interests: Evolution of the Transatlantic Relationship After OPERATION
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What is the nature of changes in the transatlantic relationship following the Iraq War?
Disagreement between some European allies and the United States over the legitimacy of the
2003 U.S. intervention in Iraq highlighted the underlying tensions between Europe and the U.S.
that have historically characterized the transatlantic relationship. These tensions are not new
and despite the much publicized division among Alliance members concerning military
intervention in Iraq, NATO will likely coalesce and adapt to meet new challenges in the future.
The NATO Alliance and the transatlantic relationship are not fatally disrupted. Rather, these
tensions are indicative of the evolution of the security debate in Europe and the U.S. in which
traditional informal alliances and frameworks are adapting to a new global security environment.
Europe is not divided on issues of security and the net result of the post-Iraq tensions could
mean a stronger – though different transatlantic tie. Specifically, the transatlantic relationship
may become stronger as a result of these tensions with the countries of eastern and southern
Europe and weaker with other traditional allies. Strong U.S. bilateral relationships with newer
members such as Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary and the Baltic States and the
so-called "New Europe" will provide a new dimension to the transatlantic relationship which may
greatly benefit the U.S. in the future. Expansion to 26 members, common perceptions on the
threat of world terrorism, continued focus on out-of-area operations, and transformation of its
command structure, will likely continue to provide common ground for the transatlantic players
even with other prospective negative points of division. This thesis asserts that NATO will
survive the severe impact of the Iraq crisis on its political cohesion but that internal informal
relationships will adapt to the new security environment.

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> In Europe our alliances are unfulfilled and in some disarray. The unity of NATO has been weakened by economic rivalry and partially eroded by national interest. It has not yet fully mobilized its resources nor fully achieved a common outlook. Yet no Atlantic power can meet on its own the mutual problems now facing us in defense, foreign aid, …and a host of other areas; and our close ties with those whose hopes and interests we share are among this Nation's most powerful assets.
>
> — John F. Kennedy, State of the Union Address, January 1961[1]

Disagreement between some European allies and the United States over the legitimacy of the 2003 intervention in Iraq serves to highlight the underlying stress between Europe and the U.S. But contrary to popular perception, these tensions are not a new phenomenon linked specifically to policies of the current Bush Administration. Rather, they reflect a continuation of subsurface tensions that have historically characterized the transatlantic relationship.

During the lead-up to the Iraq conflict and through the difficult times of the post-intervention stabilization period, the U.S. and European press focused on several much-publicized political disagreements between France, Germany, Belgium and the U.S. and generally classified these tensions as a transatlantic *rift.* In fact, some pundits (such as former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Ron Asmus) have since argued that the transatlantic relationship and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have been permanently damaged.[2]

However, to sound the death knell of NATO as the result of the Iraq crisis is premature. Despite the division among Alliance members concerning military intervention in Iraq, NATO will likely coalesce and adapt to meet new challenges in the future as it has always done. Common perceptions on the threat of world terrorism, continued focus on out-of-area operations, and the transformation of its command structure, will likely continue to provide common ground for the transatlantic players even with other prospective negative points of division.

Within this new European security framework, the U.S. will by necessity redefine its role and adjust its presence in Europe to meet new global security challenges. Specifically, as a result of the lack of a conventional external threat and tensions associated with the Franco-German opposition to (or competition with) the U.S., the American role in Europe will also undoubtedly evolve from its oft-cited Cold War role of "keeping the Russians out and the Germans down." At the very least, the "center of gravity" of the transatlantic relationship will likely shift southeastward away from the "anti-American north."

The traditional relationships between the U.S. and its European partners will also undoubtedly change. As a result of the 2003 Iraq war, "New Europe" will likely move closer to the U.S. while "Old Europe" steps away. Strong U.S. bilateral relationships with newer members (Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary and the Baltic States) will provide a new dimension to the transatlantic relationship which may greatly benefit the U.S. position in the region. In fact, some "Old Europeans" fear that the countries of the so-called "New Europe" may perhaps serve a future role as informal proxies for U.S. interests within the Alliance or "Trojan horses" within the European Union (EU).

How exactly has the transatlantic relationship changed after the Iraq War? What is the state of the NATO Alliance following the War in Iraq and what impact did the Iraq crisis really have upon Alliance cohesion? Was the disagreement over Iraq the beginning of the end or just another low point in a traditionally friendly (yet volatile) transatlantic relationship? How will the U.S. security presence evolve in the coming years as a result of these tensions?

NATO'S INTERNAL DISAGREEMENT ON IRAQ

The transatlantic relationship has always been a volatile and troubled friendship. Several crises of the past (notably the 1956 Suez Crisis, the 1966 French withdrawal from the NATO military structure,[3] the deployment of U.S. Pershing missiles in the 1980s, and the 1999 Kosovo Crisis) have been described by various authors as nadirs in the transatlantic relationship and NATO's death knell has often been pronounced imminent as a result.[4] Yet, despite these tensions, the Alliance has continually adapted and one might conclude that its cohesion actually strengthened as a result of these disagreements.

DEBATE CONCERNING THE DEFENSE OF TURKEY

The passionate debate surrounding Turkey's February 10, 2003 invocation of Article IV of NATO's founding charter resulted in what may be the most severe rift seen in the Alliance's 54-year history. Though similar to past crises in its effect on the Alliance's political cohesion, this division was unlike other crises in that it struck at the very essence of NATO's raison d'être – the idea of a "guarantee" of collective defense. The irony is not lost on even the most casual observer of NATO affairs: that at the moment of NATO's greatest symbolic victory (the absorption of the entirety of the former East European Warsaw Pact nations and three former Soviet republics), the credibility and effectiveness of the Alliance were seriously challenged by three of its charter members. This debate also brought the profound nature of the internal European division to light.

The nature of the rift in the NATO Alliance over Iraq came to wide public attention on January 22, 2003, as the result of a press conference in Paris by French president Jacques Chirac following a meeting with German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder.[5] On this day, France joined Germany in its official opposition to intervention in Iraq. Prior to this press conference, France – a permanent United Nations Security Council (UNSC) member – had left the preferred U.S. military option against Iraq open to consideration. German chancellor Schroeder had to this point been diplomatically isolated as the lone opponent of the U.S. agenda against Saddam Hussein.[6] Schroeder had promoted his opposition to intervention in Iraq during his Fall 2002 reelection campaign, stating that the U.S. had absolutely no legitimate cause to attack Iraq. Germany's scheduled elevation to one of the ten rotating non-permanent members of the UNSC in the same month guaranteed that Germany's anti-war opposition would be heard and that Germany was in a key position to work against the U.S. agenda. Chirac and Schroeder now argued together that UN weapons inspectors should be permitted more time to verify Saddam Hussein's non-compliance with previous UN resolutions (particularly Resolution 1441 of November 2002). The leaders of Germany and France from this point stood entrenched in their anti-war stance in stark opposition to all U.S. attempts to gain consensus at the UNSC and at NATO. Their position also stood in opposition to the views of at least eighteen other European countries who publicly defied the commonly perceived domination of European foreign policy by Paris and Berlin. In its reporting of this fissure, the *Wall Street Journal* insightfully summarized the impact of the January 22nd press conference:[7]

> Those few words [of agreement] repeated by the French leader at a press conference later that day, marked a historic turning point. Over the years, the U.S. has had periodic spats with its European allies. This, however, was a break of unprecedented proportions: two of Europe's most powerful countries publicly uniting to undermine Washington's top foreign priority, the overthrow of Iraq's dictator. By the end of that day, the West was headed for a diplomatic train wreck on a scale not seen since World War II, putting in question the alliances and institutions that have provided structure to the world since 1945.

NATO'S CREDIBILITY CHALLENGED

As the diplomatic wrangling over a new UN resolution on Iraq continued over the six weeks following the January 22nd Franco-German agreed position statement, the U.S.-led coalition continued its military buildup. Because of its proximity to Iraq (and also because of the U.S. coalition requirements for the use of Turkish military infrastructure and airspace in order to conduct offensive operations against Iraq), Turkey felt vulnerable to Saddam Hussein's retaliation – or in the worst case, Iraqi preemptive attacks. On the same day as Chirac's press

conference in Paris, NATO representatives in Brussels debated a U.S. request to provide defensive military equipment to Turkey. The U.S. and fourteen other allies gained consensus that NATO had an obligation to take protective measures to help a fellow Alliance member who might feel threatened by its neighbor. But France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg joined together to block the U.S. proposal, fearing "that a premature decision would impact negatively on the work being carried out by UN weapons inspectors."[8] Thus began a deadlock within the North Atlantic Council (NAC) that would last six weeks.

Internal NATO disagreement came into the open on February 10, 2003 when France, Germany and Belgium publicly declared their opposition to NATO's initiation of planning for military assistance to Turkey. Immediately following this declaration, Turkey invoked Article IV of NATO's founding treaty requiring allies "to consult whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the Parties is threatened."[9] Just as the terrorist attacks on the U.S. resulted in the first-ever invocation of NATO's Article V common defense provision, so events in the lead-up to the 2003 war in Iraq led Turkey to invoke Article IV for the first time in the Alliance's history. But unlike the consensus engendered in the former invocation, the latter resulted in what may be the true nadir in NATO's history. U.S. officials condemned the actions of the three obstructionist allies, but on February 11th, Russia added legitimacy to the Franco-German-Belgian concerns by adopting a joint position with France calling for more inspectors to be sent to Iraq.

The deadlock between the three "anti-war" countries and the remaining sixteen members of the Alliance ended on February 16th following six emergency meetings. During the crisis, some NATO diplomats noted that the failure to consult on the Article IV defense request by Turkey would "strike a blow to NATO's core commitment for all allies to rally to the defense of any one of them threatened with attack."[10] U.S. Ambassador to NATO Nicholas Burns decried the actions of the three admittedly obstructionist NATO allies, saying "because of their actions, NATO is now facing a crisis of credibility."[11] In a prepared statement presented to the Senate Armed Services Committee, Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Marc Grossman stated that "the disagreement did damage the Alliance," but quoted NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson's illustrative comment "that this was a hit above the waterline and that NATO would recover."[12] Only after the sixteen allies moved the decision to initiate planning for assistance to Turkey out of the NAC forum into the Defense Planning Committee (DPC) – where France is conspicuously absent – did NATO manage to obtain the required consensus. On February 19th, after much debate and diplomatic pressure applied to the two remaining oppositionist Allies, the DPC finally authorized NATO to provide defensive aid for Turkey.

The resulting Operation Display Deterrence (which lasted until April 16th) deployed NATO air defense, AWACs and chemical protection assets to Turkey to act as a deterrence against an attack on Turkey by Iraq. In its public statement entitled "Conclusion of Operation Display Deterrence" of April 16, 2003, NATO declared that its actions had "played an important part in maintaining stability and demonstrating Alliance solidarity at a volatile time," and quoted the Turkish Permanent Representative to NATO, who stated "we are convinced that, through such an active and collective display of deterrence, NATO has not only extended a much-appreciated helping hand to one of its members in her hour of need, but also proven, once again, its credibility and relevance as the cornerstone of collective security in the Euro-Atlantic area."[13]

However, though the NATO objective of displaying deterrence to Saddam Hussein to prevent an Iraqi attack on Turkey may have succeeded in the end, it is possible that the divisive debate which took place at NATO did not provide deterrence at all. In fact, the nastiness of the arguments in Brussels perhaps conveyed the image of profound division which may have actually *encouraged* rather than *deterred* Hussein. NATO "solidarity" had been achieved only by the exclusion of a key member from the decision-making process and the expenditure of an excessive amount of transatlantic diplomatic capital and good will.

"OLD EUROPE" VS. "NEW EUROPE"

The most intriguing result of the disagreement concerning Iraq is the exposure of the magnitude of internal European division. In an attempt to counter growing French and German dominance of European institutions, many other European states publicly opposed the Franco-German agenda of undermining the U.S. position of influence within Europe. These states can be divided into two groups – the so-called "Group of Eight" and the "Vilnius Group."

THE GROUP OF EIGHT

On January 30, 2003, five EU member countries (Portugal, Spain, Great Britain, Italy, and Denmark) and three candidate countries (Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary) publicized a strongly worded declaration in the *Wall Street Journal* supporting the U.S position on intervention in Iraq. Entitled "United We Stand," the so-called Group of Eight declaration sent a shock wave through Berlin and Paris. The Prime Ministers of these eight countries hearkened to the "real bond" between the U.S. and Europe – "the shared values of democracy, individual freedom, human rights, and the rule of law" – and concluded "the transatlantic relationship must not become a casualty of the current Iraqi regime's persistent attempts to threaten world security."[14] Evoking the language of the U.S. diplomatic stance on Iraq and its language about loss of the credibility of the UNSC, the declaration stated:[15]

Resolution 1441 is Saddam Hussein's last chance to disarm using peaceful means. The opportunity to avoid greater confrontation rests with him. Sadly this week the UN weapons inspectors have confirmed that his long-established pattern of deception, denial and noncompliance with the UN Security Council resolutions is continuing…. The UN charter charges the Security Council with the task of preserving international peace and security. To do so, the Security Council must maintain its credibility by ensuring full compliance with its resolutions. We cannot allow a dictator to systematically violate those resolutions. If they are not complied with, the Security Council will lose its credibility and world peace will suffer as a result. We are confident that the Security Council will face up to its responsibilities."

The final lines of this declaration were clearly directed at UNSC members France and Germany, who had blocked U.S. proposals at the U.N. in order to give weapons inspectors more time. The references to "European unity" throughout the document were veiled attempts to tell France and Germany that they were risking a deeper division in Europe. These leaders had clearly posited their countries on the American side of the argument. Though overtly seen as a pro-U.S. stance on the Iraq issue, reading between the lines of this public statement yields a conclusion of a more direct resistance by the "rest of Europe" to a perceived Franco-German arrogance of setting Europe's common foreign policy. [16]

THE VILNIUS TEN

To add insult to injury, on February 4, 2003, ten EU candidate states (the self-styled Vilnius-Ten, or V-10, of the NATO candidate countries of Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, or FYROM) followed suit by endorsing the position of the Group of Eight. Using similar language to the Group of Eight declaration, the Vilnius Group took an even stronger position. Not only did these countries accept the ideological and political stance of the U.S. against France by calling on the UNSC to "take necessary and appropriate action in response to Iraq's continuing threat to international peace," but they also hearkened back to the symbolic November 8, 2002 NATO Summit declaration (in which seven of them had been invited as new members of the Alliance): "In the event of non-compliance with the terms of… [Resolution 1441], we are prepared to contribute to an international coalition to enforce its provisions and the disarmament of Iraq." [17]

It seems inexplicable at first glance that the governments of these eighteen countries defied the public will of their electorates as well as Franco-German pressure and instead supported the U.S. at great political risk. [18] According to a Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) report, popular polling amongst the populations of the V-10 demonstrated low support

for intervention in Iraq.[19] In the most supportive country (Romania), 45 percent of the population supported their government's position and 38 percent opposed intervention. The least supportive country (FYROM) showed only 10 percent of the population as supportive. High negative poll ratings were registered in the new NATO members as well, with 82 percent of Hungarians and 67 percent of Czechs against intervention.[20] Yet despite opposition to the U.S. policy position, the populations for the most part were not expressing anti-Americanism, as might be the case in France or Germany. Quoting a political scientist at the Czech Institute of International Relations, Petr Drulak, the RFE/RL report offers perhaps the best explanation available for this disparity between the V-10 and Group of Eight position on Iraq and that of its population:[21]

> …(it can be) explained by the fact that people in the region do not display a passionate interest in developments in the Middle East and Iraq. That's why governments and political elites can ignore the popular sentiment to a large extent, because they can be sure that even if the country supports possible American military action, that there will be no huge mass demonstrations in the street, because even if people are against the war, they don't feel about it that strongly to punish their government for participation in it. So the government, clearly, has to decide between public opinion, which is against war but doesn't feel too strongly about it, and its commitments to Americans and to its Atlantic orientation. And the governments tend to choose the Atlantic orientation.

Despite the public opposition or apathy, supporting the U.S. and alienating France and Germany was perhaps the riskiest choice many of these countries could make prior to EU and NATO accession. French president Jacques Chirac's blunt remarks on February 17th concerning the eighteen countries' defiance of Paris and how Romania and Bulgaria, in particular, could not have found a better way to derail their EU candidacy, brought scathing condemnations from the leaders of those countries, as well as the original eight signatories. To Chirac's insulting comment that these countries were "exhibiting irresponsible behavior characteristic of poor upbringing, …They missed a good opportunity to keep quiet,"[22] a chorus of rebukes ensued throughout Europe, to include Prime Minister Tony Blair who reminded Chirac that all countries were "free to speak their mind."[23] European governments were clearly divided – 18 to 3.

GENESIS OF A NEW RELATIONSHIP

As a result of the Iraq conflict, the Global War on Terrorism, and the receptive nature of the new NATO members to cultivate closer bilateral ties, the U.S. will likely continue to align itself more closely with its newest, most cooperative, and most ardent supporters within the Alliance. This will inevitably mean a shift eastwards in the U.S. center of gravity in Europe

towards the most receptive countries: Poland, the Baltic States, Romania, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Albania, FYROM, Croatia and perhaps Turkey. Though still anchored in NATO as the basis of the transatlantic relationship, future U.S. interests in Europe will grow in these countries.

EASTWARD U.S. FORCE REPOSTURING

According to many commentators, eastern and southeastern portions of Europe are poised in prime positions beneficial to U.S. security interests. In 2001, prior to the terrorist attacks on the U.S. and subsequent NATO expansion to 26 members, James Kurth summarized the geopolitical environment of the region:[24]

> The countries of central and eastern Europe are generally less critical and more accepting of America than those of western Europe, and U.S. objectives can best be met by advancing the fortunes and status of the former as a balance to the latter. This would be furthered by the enlargement of the European Union; but it would be furthered with even more assurance by the enlargement of NATO. The result of NATO enlargement would be the consolidation of Europe under American leadership and its rendering into an embodiment and expression of the American way of globalization. The inclusion of the Baltic states would consolidate this American-led European core up to the frontier where the American project of globalization meets one of its principal opponents – Russia. The inclusion of the Balkan states would consolidate this core up to the frontier where the American project meets another set of opponents – the rogue states of the Middle East.

Thus it is no surprise that rumors began to appear as early as February 2003 in conjunction with the Wehrkunde Conference on Security (which takes place annually in Munich), along with speculations from Polish newspapers that the U.S. would move its forces from Germany to Poland. On February 10, 2003 the British newspaper *The Guardian* reported that U.S. and German officials had discussed this at Wehrkunde[25] and quoted Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld as saying that "we are reviewing our bases…the centre of gravity is shifting in the (NATO) alliance. The interest and the enthusiasm that the countries that had lived under repressive regimes previously (have for NATO) is a good thing for NATO."[26] Thus it was becoming clear to many in Europe that the U.S. was in fact seriously contemplating realigning its forces in Europe eastward to Romania, Bulgaria and Poland. This suspicion was confirmed two weeks later following a visit to the U.S. by Bulgarian Prime Minister Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha and Minister of Defense Nikolai Svinarov. Though the U.S. had based KC-135 aircraft in Burgas, Bulgaria during Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and since February 10th for Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Svinarov leaked to the Bulgarian state news agency BTA that the U.S. intended to do more than just temporarily base aircraft in his country.[27] Svinarov stated that his country "could provide four or five bases to the U.S." and that these forces would move

from Germany. [28] U.S. spokesmen continued to downplay the reports and dismissed outright any linkage of U.S. realigned force postures in Europe with the political difficulties over intervention in Iraq with Germany, Belgium and France. But the timing of the speculations could not but help fuel the idea that the U.S. would disengage from its traditional allies as a result of political differences over Iraq.[29]

Then on March 4th, the commander of the U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) General James Jones announced that plans were indeed being developed for realigning the U.S. force posture eastward to "countries like Poland, Bulgaria, and Romania."[30] Jones indicated that bases like Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany would remain, but the rest of the 78,000 U.S. forces would likely move elsewhere.[31] Although no formal proposals have been forthcoming since then in regards to actual bases and specific countries, it remains likely that the U.S. will consider further development of operating bases of a fixed, though not necessarily permanent nature (so-called lily-pads). When asked directly in a May 19, 2003 interview about whether the U.S. intended to use Romanian bases, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz revealed a key lens through which the Pentagon was looking when it evaluated a potential European basing site – that of a country's support to the U.S. during OEF and OIF. Remarking that Romania was indeed a potential candidate for a future forward operating base, Wolfowitz stated that "a contribution Romania made to both those operations makes us think about Romania in a different way than we did before, but that's as much as I can say at this point because we haven't drawn any conclusions yet." [32]

It seems a widely held view that relocation of U.S. European bases to southwest Europe, particularly the Black Sea littoral states of Bulgaria and Romania makes geo-strategic sense within the framework of the 2002 *National Security Strategy* and the 2001 *Quadrennial Defense Review*. These documents outline and emphasize the need for flexible, rapid responses to crisis areas in Central and South Asia, and the Middle East.[33] When combined with a new mistrust of traditional allies as a result of the Iraq crisis and a disdain of using NATO to fight wars as the result of the Kosovo experience, this strategic imperative requires an adjustment to the U.S. force presence in Europe. Using what Josef Joffe, editor of the German newspaper *Die Zeit*, has referred to as a "hubs and spokes" approach, with the U.S. as the hub and radiating spokes located in Europe, Middle East, Far East, Latin America, etc., America has placed itself in a position directly contrary to that of the Cold War, in which formal alliances were its hubs.[34]

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U.S. TROJAN HORSES AND THE NEW EUROPEAN SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

The U.S. stands on the cusp of a new security environment which can only work to its own benefit. Strong new allies within NATO, when added to already strong relationships with Great Britain, Italy, and Spain, will create a formidable bloc that will enhance U.S. interests and counter the opposition of its competitors within the Alliance. Furthermore, the advent of friendly proxies within the EU will serve as an inroad to influence this organization when it directly threatens U.S. interests. This view can be seen in the reporting of John Vinocur, who recently wrote an article entitled "The Big Winner in the EU Expansion: Washington." In this article, Vinocur quotes German Foreign Ministry spokesman Karsten Voight as ruing the accession into the EU of pro-U.S. countries by noting the impact that these states will have:[35]

> Any concept attempting to define the EU as an organization that is basically against the United States is no longer able to muster a majority. That temptation is finished. As an enlarged Europe comes into being and defines itself, that view of (an antagonistic) Europe, or that American analysis of what the EU means, is overtaken."

Indeed, "Old Europe's" view that the countries of "New Europe" – and the V-10 countries in particular – are a form of "Trojan Horse" within NATO and the EU, may have some validity. [36] The fact that Bulgaria supported the U.S. against France and Germany in critical voting in the UNSC during the Iraq conflict, illustrates this dynamic and its potential disruption of Franco-German dominance of a hoped-for common European foreign policy. But far from accepting the Trojan Horse allusion or accepting roles as proxies of the U.S., the pro-American countries of the EU and NATO often describe themselves as "bridges"[37] between the U.S. and European perspective. Yet, the potential for U.S. mischief in European politics nonetheless remains a specter to the French and Germans. In contrast to the desire of certain countries within "New Europe" to use the U.S. as leverage against Franco-German dominance, this dynamic may also provide the U.S. leverage to counter French and German anti-U.S. designs by aligning itself informally with the "New Europe." Undoubtedly, some Europeans suspect this to be the true intent of current U.S. European policy. Referring to the new U.S. coalition-based approach to Europe, Josef Joffe wryly noted the following about the current U.S. position vis-à-vis particular European political players:[38]

> A privileged member is Great Britain, another, though more ambiguously so, is Germany. France is simultaneously an active ally (as in the Balkans or in Afghanistan) and a *quondam* object of containment. Poland – and indeed all the beneficiaries of the American-led enlargement of NATO – as well as Turkey, are useful counterweights against the larger continentals. Europe itself is a regional version of the American hub-and-spokes system, with the United States ever so

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subtly playing some against others, or recruiting posses for the intervention *du jour.*

FUTURE OF THE TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONSHIP: DIVORCE OR EVOLUTION?

With the existence of deepening resentments between "Old" and "New" Europe as outlined above, it is unlikely that there will be an outright U.S.-European divorce in the future. It is likely that strong U.S. links to Europe will migrate southeastward as relationships in these regions further develop and traditional relationships with countries such as Germany, France and Belgium grow frostier. This outcome does not necessitate a severance of traditional ties with allies France and Germany. Rather, it requires that the U.S. recognize that the European security environment is changing and that it must meet this new challenge by re-aligning its forces to friendly and effective operating environments more suitable to its own changing security needs.

NATO has already fundamentally changed. As a result of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the U.S. perception of the failures of NATO as an instrument for war fighting arising from the 1999 Kosovo conflict, the U.S. view of the Alliance has perhaps also irrevocably changed. The U.S. policy that in future wars the mission will drive the coalition and not the other way around, is a fundamental vote of no confidence in the Alliance. Josef Joffe, has commented that the "first victim" of this new U.S. doctrine was NATO.[39] Offering a variant of the "NATO is dead" argument, Joffe goes on to point out that a new phoenix has arisen from NATO's ashes as a result of the U.S. response to the September 11th attacks:[40]

> Indeed, NATO as we have known it for half a century, as an anti-Soviet alliance, is dead. That was NATO I, in essence a unilateral American guarantee binding the United States to the defense of Europe. It has been replaced by NATO II, best defined as a collection of states, now including Russia, from which the United States draws coalition partners *ad hoc*. NATO II, in other words, is a pool, not a pact; accordingly, in NATO II's first war, (some) members acted as chosen handmaidens, not as foreordained beneficiaries, of American might.

For this reason, as well as fears of irrelevancy or inability to restrain the U.S., the states of the so-called "Old Europe" may now be starting to feel the true ramifications of the Iraq war. Whether these tremors crack the NATO edifice remains to be seen. It is not inevitable. Germany has already begun to soften its anti-U.S. posture.[41] In late 2003 with the visit of Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer to Washington, Germany had already begun to lessen its opposition to U.S. positions on post-war stabilization, effectively isolating France as Washington's premier opponent. Though a majority of Germans now see France as their most reliable ally and not the

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U.S., there is some discomfort that "if Germany wants to lead in Europe, it must not let itself be represented by France."[42]

THE STATE OF NATO AFTER THE IRAQ CRISIS

The impact of the war in Iraq and parallel discussions of U.S. force realignment can't be ignored. The events served as catalysts for the post-Cold War evolution of the Alliance. In this context, the contention between the U.S. coalition and the three anti-war allies over intervention in Iraq may be understood to be in fact quite different from any other previous crisis. As stated above, this particular crisis struck not only at the essence of NATO's raison d'être – the "guarantee" of collective defense – but cast doubts on the Alliance's future ability to act decisively. Is the Alliance's failure to achieve consensus on Iraq therefore a harbinger of a future lack of consensus? Although many theorists have opined about NATO's viability as an alliance from its very beginning, for the first time in its history, the credibility of the NATO Alliance's commitment and its ability to enforce collective security has truly come into question. Although the diplomatic crisis relating to the Article IV defense of Turkey – like Operation Display Deterrence itself – proved successful in the end, some commentators nonetheless cite this incident as the genesis of the final demise of NATO. [43]

However, the reality of the state of NATO's health after Iraq might best be summed up by Secretary of State Colin Powell. In a statement before the U.S. Senate on April 29, 2003, Powell summarized the impact of the split within NATO as a result of the Article IV discussions:[44]

> …I do not want to minimize the challenges that the relationship faces today as we attempt to shape both it and the Alliance for a world no longer fenced off by the Cold War. In February we had a bruising debate in NATO over providing assistance to Turkey. In the end we achieved our goal of providing support for Turkey's defense. We would have preferred to make that decision at 19, instead of at 18, but France would not permit it. The United States and many of its NATO partners found it regrettable that some members so readily discarded their obligations under Article IV to provide purely defensive assistance to Turkey in order to press their own agendas on Iraq. Make no mistake. The disagreement was serious, and our delay to Turkey's request damaged the credibility of our Alliance. Likewise, outside of the Alliance we have come through another bruising battle, this one at the UN Security Council over Iraq. This battle included five current and one future member of NATO. This too has raised troubling voices about the long-term health of the Alliance. But now that the war in Iraq is over and the defensive measures taken in Turkey are ended, we can look back at these disagreements and debates with dispassion and against the backdrop of almost half a century of cooperation….

> …So I caution those who, yet again, will write about the demise of NATO. We heard this story after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. We heard it during the troubled times in the Balkans. I give naysayers of

NATO credit for their persistence – but they are persistently wrong. Any alliance that countries are knocking on the door to get into is anything but dead. After the heated debate over Turkey, Secretary General Robertson said the damage done to NATO was a hit above the waterline, not below. The same can be said about the fall-out on NATO from the debate in the UN Security Council over Iraq….

On a superficial level, NATO *did* survive the severe impact of the Iraq crisis on its political cohesion. However, expansion to 26 members and the internal tensions resulting from the Iraq war will undoubtedly affect the internal political dynamics, decisiveness, effectiveness, and even the nature of the Alliance. Following the disagreements at NATO over Iraq, the Article IV and Article V security guarantees that fundamentally attracted these countries to NATO in the first place could now be suspect as true assurances for their national security. As a result of the debate over the Article IV consultations on Turkey's defense, seeds of doubt may have been placed in the minds of the governments of eastern and southern Europe that NATO may not heed a future call for help. The issue of whether the disagreement over Iraq is the beginning of the end or just another low point in a volatile transatlantic relationship will continue to be debated in the foreseeable future. However, it is evident that the challenge to NATO's viability and effectiveness is not the result of disagreement on any single issue such as Iraq. Instead, the credibility of an expanded NATO hinges on the Alliance's ability to effectively deal with the increasing disparity between the strategic visions of Europe and the U.S. and within Europe itself.

CONCLUSIONS

Examination of the post-Iraq security environment in Europe demonstrates that the transatlantic relationship is not dead nor dying, but is simply evolving. Disagreement between some European allies and the U.S. over the legitimacy of the 2003 U.S. intervention in Iraq did highlight the underlying tensions between Europe and the U.S. that have historically characterized the transatlantic relationship. But these tensions are certainly not new, and despite the much publicized division among Alliance members concerning military intervention in Iraq, NATO will likely coalesce and adapt to meet new challenges in the future.

Strong U.S. bilateral relationships with newer members of NATO will provide a new dimension to the transatlantic relationship which may greatly benefit U.S. interests. These deepening relationships with pro-American countries in eastern and southern Europe and future U.S. force realignment and rebasing in these countries should enhance U.S. interests.

WORD COUNT=5,989

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ENDNOTES

[1] Kennedy, John Fitzgerald, *State of the Union 1961*, available from <http://odur.let.rug.nl/ ~usa/P/jk35/speeches/jfk61.htm>. Internet, accessed 12 December, 2003: 5.

[2] Asmus, Ronald D., "Rebuilding the Atlantic Alliance," *Foreign Affairs,* vol. 82, no. 5 (Sep/Oct 2003): 20-31.

[3] Indeed, the French secession from the NATO military structure (which facilitated movement of NATO headquarters from Paris to Brussels) and the debate over nuclear weapons in the 1960s were perceived as such severe blows to the transatlantic relationship that Henry A. Kissinger could pointedly author a book in 1966 reassessing the utility of the Alliance to U.S. interests. Kissinger, Henry A., The *Troubled Partnership: A Re-appraisal of the Atlantic Alliance* (McGraw Hill, New York, NY, 1965). See also "Our Alternatives in Europe" by Herman Kahn and William Pfaff (*Foreign Affairs*, April 1966), 587-600.

[4] The most recent death knell of NATO has been sounded by Steven E. Meyer in the winter 2003-2004 issue of *Parameters* (see "Carcass of Dead Policies: The Irrelevance of NATO," *Parameters*, Volume XXXIII, no.4). See also "NATO: Time to Call it a Day?" by Colin S. Gray (*The National Interest*, Winter 1987/88). The most recent well-known articles of the "NATO is at Risk" genre include "Rebuilding the Atlantic Alliance," by Ronald D. Asmus (*Foreign Affairs*, Sep/Oct 2003) and Sean Kay's "Putting NATO Back Together Again" (*Current History*, March 2003). Josef Joffe, in a Spring 2003 article in the journal *The National Interest* entitled "Continental Divides," proclaims that "The Atlantic Alliance has been dying a slow death ever since Christmas day 1991, when the Soviet Union committed suicide by dissolution. Having won the Cold War, the Alliance lost its central purpose and began to crumble like a bridge no longer in use – slowly, almost invisibly" (see *The National Interest*, no. 71, Spring 2003).

[5] Champion, Marc, Charles Fleming, Ian Johnson and Carla Anne Robbins. "How the Iraq Confrontation Divided the Western Alliance: France and Germany Strive to Check American Might," *Wall Street Journal*, 27 March 2003, 1.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Monaco, Annalisa, "Iraq: Another Test for NATO?" *NATO Notes* 5, no. 1, 31 January 2003 (Center for European Security and Disarmament, Brussels, Belgium), available from <http://www.cesd.org/natonotes/notes51.htm>, Internet; accessed 15 October, 2003, 1.

[9] North Atlantic Treaty Organization; "NATO Basic Documents: The North Atlantic Treaty, Washington, DC – 4 April 1949"; available from <http:www.NATO.int/docu/basictxt/treaty.htm>: Internet; accessed 23 September 2003; 1.

[10] Associated Press, "Allies Block Aid to Turkey," 10 February, 2003, available from <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/iraq/attack/2003/0210alliblo.htm>, Internet; accessed 23 September 2003; 1.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Department of State; *Marc Grossman, Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Testimony Before the Senate Armed Services Committee*, 28 March 2003, available from <http://www.state.gov/p/19119.htm>, and <http://www.usembassy.org.uk/NATO176.html>, accessed 23 September 2003; 1.

[13] North Atlantic Treaty Organization; "Conclusion of Operation Display Deterrence, NATO Statement, 16 April, 2003"; Brussels, Belgium. available from <http://www.foreignpolicy.org.tr /eng/nato/natostatement_160403.htm>. Internet; accessed 23 September 2003.

[14] Aznar, Jose Maria, Jose-Manuel Durão Barroso, Silvio Berlusconi, Tony Blair, Vaclav Havel, Peter Medgyessy, Leszek Miller and Anders Fogh Rasmussen, "United We Stand," *Wall Street Journal*, January 30, 2003.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Joffe, Josef, "Continental Divides," *The National Interest,* No. 71 (Spring 2003):159.

[17] Vilnius Group Countries, "Statement of the Vilnius Group of Countries in Response to the Presentation by the United States Secretary of State to the United Nations Security Council Concerning Iraq," February 5, 2003.

[18] The Vilnius Group Declaration has often been discounted as a substantive disavowal of the Franco-German position at the U.N. by light of the fact that it had been drafted by Bruce Jackson, a corporate representative of Lockheed Martin Corporation and a well-known Republican representative of the U.S. Committee on NATO. As such, it was the view of many commentators that this declaration was no more than a regurgitation of the U.S. policy position and that the Vilnius Group leaders signed the document in an attempt to curry favor with the U.S. for ratification on the NATO enlargement protocols. Though this may have some basis in truth, the fact remains that the governments of the ten countries were willing to sign such a declaration in the face of strong pressure and possible negative ramifications in the capitals of NATO allies in Berlin, Brussels, Paris, and Luxembourg City, who had not yet ratified and the NATO expansion protocols. Signatures affixed on this document by the ten prime ministers was also notably risky in their respective national political environment, where such a position vis-à-vis Iraq was not popular.

[19] Tomic, Eugen, "Eastern Europe: Do Citizens of the Vilnius 10 Support Action Against Iraq, or only Their Governments?" Radio Free Europe Weekly Report, 7 Feb, 2003, Radio Free Europe, Prague, Czech Republic.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Radio Free Europe, "EU: Candidate Countries Consider Chirac's Remarks," 18 February, 2003, Radio Free Europe, Prague, Czech Republic; and BBC News/Europe "New Europe' Backs EU on Iraq", February 9[th,] 2003, BBC News, London.

[23] Ibid., Some examples cited by the BBC: "Jacques Chirac should regret such expressions, which are not in the spirit of friendship and democratic relationships" (Ion Iliescu, President of Romania); "This approach will not help create unity in the Security Council" (Lubomir Ivanov,

Bulgarian Deputy Foreign Minister); "Poland…also has a right to decide what is in its own good, and France should in its turn consider it with respect" (Adam Rotfield, Polish Deputy Foreign Minister); "No-one can oblige us to be silent" (Istvan Szent-Ivanyi, Chairman of the Hungarian Parliament's EU Integration Committee): "All we would say is that the more plurality of opinion in Europe, the better it is. Our country and other countries have a right to express our opinions (Tina Maiberg, Estonian Foreign Ministry spokesman). See BBC News/Europe "New Europe' Backs EU on Iraq", February 9[th,] 2003, BBC News, London.

[24] Kurth, James, "The Next NATO: Building and American Commonwealth of Nations," *The National Interest* (Fall 2001):8.

[25] Guardian Newspapers, "Washington to Cut Bases in Germany as its Forces Head East," February 10, 2003, available from <http://www.buzzle.com/editorials/text2-10-2003-35294.asp>. Internet, accessed December 1, 2003.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Reuters, "Bulgaria Says US May Move Troop Bases from Germany," February 27, 2003, available from <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/news/854073/posts>. Internet, accessed 1 December 2003: 1.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Minister of Defense Svinarov had in fact met no member of the Bush administration during his visit to Washington with Prime Minister Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. He had in fact offered Bulgarian bases to U.S. congressmen during meetings with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

[30] Landler, Mark, "US Troops Marching East?" *International Herald Tribune*, March 4, 2003, available from <http://www.iht.com/cgi-bin/generic/cgi?template88478>. Internet, accessed December 1, 2003.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Department of Defense, *News Transcript: Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz Interview with Dan Preda, Radio Romania, May 19, 2003*, available at <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2003tr20030519-depsecdef0206.html>. Internet, accessed 1 December 1, 2003.

[33] For a detailed analytical discussion of the reasoning behind potential U.S. force realignment, see Kurt M. Campbell and Celeste Johnson Ward, "New Battle Stations?, *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 82, no. 5 (Sep/Oct 2003): 95-103.

[34] Joffe, Josef, "Of Hubs, Spokes and Public Goods," *The National Interest,* No. 69 (Fall 2002):18.

[35] Vinocur, John, "The Big Winner in the EU Expansion: Washington," *International Herald Tribune*, December 89, 2002, available from <http://www.iht.com/cgi-bin/generic/cgi?template79601>, Internet, accessed December 1, 2003.

[36] Quoting Polish president Alexander Kwasniewski in regards to the Trojan horse allusion, Vinocur cites Kwasniewski saying: "To say that we're a Trojan horse of the United States" in the EU "is unjust." But he also asserted that "there would be no Europe without American democracy," and that the EU's stringent conditions for entry meant risking "what there is left of enthusiasm" for joining the organization.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Joffe, Josef, "Of Hubs, Spokes and Public Goods," *The National Interest,* No. 69 (Fall 2002):18.

[39] Joffe, Josef, "Of Hubs, Spokes and Public Goods," *The National Interest,* No. 69 (Fall 2002):17-18.

[40] Ibid., 17-18.

[41] Interestingly, some German commentators have remarked that Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's antiwar stance damaged German interests. For example, Ulrike Guerot, of the Research Institute of the German Council of Foreign Relations has stated that his country's anti-war position "drove Germany into a French trap." Hujer, Mark, "U.S. Strengthens German Ties," *Washington Times*, November 19, 2003: Sec A., 17.

[42] Ibid.

[43] The pronouncements concerning NATO's demise expressed during the deadlock at NATO are exemplified in the comments of François Heisbourg, director of France's Foundation for Strategic Research, who is quoted by the *New York Times* as stating "welcome to the end of the Atlantic alliance." Heisbourg argued that the rupture between Europe and the United States, however fleeting it may prove, is the inevitable consequence of Washington's increasingly unilateral decision-making. (see "3 NATO members and Russia Resist U.S. On Iraq Plans" by Craig S. Smith, with Richard Bernstein, *New York Times*, February 11, 2003, Sec A1). See also comments by Stefan Cornilius, foreign editor of the *Suddeutsche Zeitung* newspaper in Germany, who stated "It's basically ripping NATO apart. We have two camps in NATO now, one believing (that) the traditional core of NATO (is) to help and aid a member which might be threatened militarily, and the other one which sees this attempt as a tool for the American build-up for war in Iraq, and doesn't want to go along with it. We have a major political conflict that hasn't been there in NATO." (*Radio Netherlands Wereldomroep*, 10 February, 2003, available from <http://www.rnw.nl/ hotspots/html/tur030210.html>. Internet, accessed 23 September 2003).

[44] Department of State; *Secretary of State Colin L. Powell Testimony Before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee on NATO Enlargement,* 29 April 2003, available from <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm /2003/20045.htm>, and <http://www.foreignpolicy.org.tr/eng/ nato/powell_290403.htm>, Internet, accessed 23 September 2003.

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